

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 NSC-07 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03

DRC-01 /077 W

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P R 180242Z APR 74

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO USLO PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 0391

USIA WASHDC

UNCLAS HONG KONG 4247

USIAC

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: PRESS STORY ON AMBASSADOR BRUCE

REF: STATE 078363

1. TEXT OF UPI STORY GIVEN REFTEL NOT REPEAT NOT SAME STORY WHICH RAN ON UPI WIRE HERE AND WHICH WAS REPRINTED IN SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST, HONGKONG STANDARD (FRONT PAGE) AND RIGHT-LEANING CHINESE PAPERS.

2. FOLLOWING IS COMPLETE TEXT OF STORY AS RECEIVED HERE.
QUOTE: HONG KONG, APRIL 17 -- AMERICAN AMBASSADOR DAVID BRUCE IS FED UP WITH PEKING.

3. HE WANTS OUT -- AND SOON.

4. THAT'S THE WORD FROM DIPLOMATS AND OTHER WELL-PLACED SOURCES IN PEKING AND WASHINGTON WHO ARE CLOSE TO THE 76-YEAR-OLD CHIEF OF THE U.S. LIAISON OFFICE IN THE CHINESE CAPITAL.

5. HIS DESIRE TO LEAVE IS NOT NECESSARILY RELATED TO ANY DECLINE IN SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS, ACCORDING TO THESE SOURCES, ALTHOUGH UNCLASSIFIED

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THERE DEFINITELY HAS BEEN A 'COOLING' OF RELATIONS IN RECENT MONTHS.

6. BRUCE WANTS TO RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS.

7. ONE IS HIS AGE. BECAUSE OF HIS ADVANCED AGE IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT HIS STAY IN PEKING WOULD NOT BE LONG WHEN PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON

CALLED HIM OUT OF RETIREMENT LAST YEAR TO TAKE THE POST.

8. PEKING IS 'NOT HIS KIND OF TOWN', ONE SOURCE QUOTED HIM AS SAYING. HE FEELS IT IS FAR TOO DULL AND RESTRICTIVE.

9. HIS WIFE LIKES PEKING EVEN LESS THAN HE.

10. MORE IMPORTANT THAN THESE PERSONAL REASONS IS THE MATTER OF PROFESSIONAL PRIDE, THESE SOURCES INDICATED.

11. BRUCE FEELS HIS PRESENCE IN PEKING IS NOT NECESSARY NOW, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT HE HAS NO ACCESS TO TOP CHINESE LEADERS.

12. SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER HAS HANDLED ALL THE TOP LEVEL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RANKING CHINESE -- MAINLY COMMUNIST PARTY CHAIRMAN MAO TSE-RUNG AND PREMIER CHOU EN-LAI. INDICATIONS ARE THAT KISSINGER WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO.

13. IN VIEW OF THIS, BRUCE IS SAID TO FEEL THAT HIS DEPUTIES -- JOHN HOLDERIDGE (SIC) AND ALFRED LE S. JENKINS -- COULD, AND SHOULD, HANDLE OTHER NEGOTIATIONS WITH LOWER LEVEL OFFICIALS. THEY ARE CHINA SPECIALISTS AND HE IS NOT.

14. WHEN HE LEFT WASHINGTON EARLY LAST MAY TO TAKE UP HIS PEKING POST, BRUCE SAID HE WAS GOING 'WITH GREAT ENTHUSIASM AND HIGH HOPES.'

15. HIS ENTHUSIASM HAS DIMMED AND HIS HOPES HAVE BEEN DASHED SINCE HIS ARRIVAL IN PEKING LAST MAY 15.

16. NOT ONLY HAS HIS ACCESS TO TOP CHINESE OFFICIALS BEEN SEVERELY RESTRICTED BUT HE ALSO IS CUT OUT OF THE FORMAL DIPLOMATIC SOCIAL UNCLASSIFIED

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CIRCLE.

17. BECAUSE THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT HAVE A FULL-FLEDGED EMBASSY HE AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE LIAISON OFFICE TO (SIC) NOT RECEIVE INVITATIONS TO ANY FORMAL DIPLOMATIC FUNCTIONS.

18. THIS DOES NOT PREVENT BRUCE FROM HAVING PLENTY OF CONTACT WITH OTHER DIPLOMATS. BUT IT CONTRIBUTES TO REDUCING THE AMOUNT OF

CONTACT HE CAN HAVE WITH CHINESE OFFICIALS.

19. BRUCE RECENTLY RETURNED TO PEKING AFTER A FAIRLY LONG ABSENCE. WHILE IN WASHINGTON HE MADE IT KNOW THAT HE WANTS TO LEAVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

20. WELL-PLACED SOURCES SAID STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS -- PRESUMABLY INCLUDING KISSINGER HIMSELF -- ASKED BRUCE TO STAY ON A WHILE LONGER, FOR DIPLOMACY'S SAKE. THIS APPARENTLY MEANS AT LEAST UNTIL HE OBSERVED HIS FIRST ANNIVERSARY AS HEAD OF THE LIAISON OFFICE.

21. FOR HIM TO LEAVE WHILE THERE IS INCREASING TALK OF 'COOLING OFF' OF SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS WOULD ONLY ADD FUEL TO THESE FLAMES OF SPECULATION, HE WAS TOLD IN WASHINGTON, THE SOURCES SAID.

2. BRUCE AGREED TO STAY. BUT NOT FOR LONG. UNQUOTE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, RETIREMENT, AMBASSADORS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 APR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974HONGK04247
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740089-1131
From: HONG KONG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740434/aaaabdsl.tel
Line Count: 133
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 078363
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: kellerpr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 SEP 2002 by BryanSD>; APPROVED <27 DEC 2002 by kellerpr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS STORY ON AMBASSADOR BRUCE
TAGS: PFOR, US, CH, (BRUCE, DAVID K E)
To: n/a
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005